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that his scheme has any special sanction from the natural law of equal freedom ; and when he lays down the rule that "the play which has for its hero a pickpocket" should be "forbidden public exhibition" (see p. 327), as *one of the corollaries of individualism*, he becomes grotesque. And so, when (on page 303 and elsewhere) our authors write in favor of the compulsory opening of the ports of the British colonies to duty-free goods, and the compulsory imposition upon them of "free competition in the supply of capital to labor," they may or may not be advocating a wise policy ; in either case they have a right to express their opinion — yet when their advocacy of the use of the army and navy for this purpose is put forth as a part of the great gospel of individual liberty — a gospel which requires (see p. 295) that a father shall in no wise be prevented from "bringing up a family as he likes, and from regulating his household according to his own notions," regardless of the effect upon the other members of the family of the "notions" of an ignorant and brutal parent—and when in support of their compulsory freedom they say that "to compel people to be prosperous cannot be called oppression," and coolly remark (p. 151), in reference to the protests of those who do not wish to be coerced into adopting Messrs. Hake and Wesslau's view of what is good for them, that "the unreasonable we need not heed"—we are left in a state of uncertainty whether we should most admire our authors' logic or their sense of humor.

FREDERIC W. SANDERS.

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*The Law of Civilization and Decay.* An Essay on History. By BROOKS ADAMS. viii + 302. Price \$2.50. London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., Lim. New York: Macmillan & Co. 1895.

MR. ADAMS is a fair example of a certain class of economic writers who have treated history somewhat as the old theologians used to treat the Scriptures—as a sort of rusty nail box out of which they selected odds and ends of broken nails or rusty screws in order to tack some framework of doctrine together, the likeness of which was never to be found in the thought of God or man. Mr. Adams not only has a theory, but as it used to be said about Matthew Henry's Commentary, that he made even the foxes' tails point to Christ, Mr. Adams makes all history point to his theory. If the facts do not fit his theory, he does not hesitate to cut off a foot now and then or stretch a joint.

Mr. Adams' theory, his "law of civilization and decay," as he styles it,—the dismalest product of the "dismal science" up to date,—is thus stated: "The law of force and energy is of universal application in nature. Animal life is one of the outlets through which solar energy is dissipated." Here, of course, Mr. Adams stands upon a generally accepted principle of physical science, and no issue is to be raised. But the next proposition presents only a half truth. "As human societies are forms of animal life, these societies must differ among themselves in energy in proportion as nature has endowed them more or less abundantly with energetic material."

With proper qualifications, exception could hardly be taken to this statement. But in his next proposition Mr. Adams appears as a thoroughgoing materialist.

"Thought is one of the manifestations of human energy, and among the earlier and simpler phases of thought two stand conspicuous—fear and greed. Fear, which by stimulating the imagination creates a belief in an invisible world, and ultimately develops a priesthood; and greed, which dissipates energy in war and trade" (preface, p. vii).

That is, Mr. Adams finds the source of all kinds of human activity, moral and spiritual—Mr. Adams will pardon the use of the word—as well as physical, in solar energy. This solar energy, under the delicate alchemy of "fear and greed" operating in the laboratory of the human breast, is transmuted into the myriad motives, activities, and results of modern civilization.

In applying these principles to the progress of civilization, Mr. Adams finds a series of constantly recurring cycles. In each cycle there is, *first*, a period of accumulation or hoarding. Among primitive men fear, operating upon the imagination, creates a belief in deity, while greed in those who represent deity enables them to plunder the superstitious and to amass vast hoards of wealth, represented in shrines, temples, cathedrals, and monastic establishments. Among more advanced people the martial spirit displaces the imagination. The soldier supplants the priest. Greed, however, determines the lines of activity, and martial energy expresses itself in centralization. Such vast agglomerations of power as are represented by the Roman Empire, or the monarchy of the Bourbons, are the results of greed amassing wealth through the martial spirit. In more advanced times the martial spirit gives way to the economic. The result is the same. The

weak are plundered by the strong. Wealth is centralized, that is, it is hoarded in a few hands, who are enabled thereby to control government and direct legislation, thus still farther to increase and perpetuate their power. A most pertinent example is to be found in the flagrant plundering of the gold-standard nations by the great banking firms of the nineteenth century (page 289). *Second*, the period of hoarding is followed by a period of plunder by violence, in which those who have not, plunder those who have. This period begins when the power of attack surpasses the power of defense. That is whenever the hoarders who control the police power are unable to protect their wealth. As illustrations, we have the plunder of the Orient by the Crusaders, of the Temple by Philip the Fair, of the monasteries by the Protestant reformers, and of India by the English.

*Third*, the period of plunder is followed by a period of economic activity. Greed now defies fear. Imagination, or the emotional nature, ceases to direct the energies of men. The era of faith, or "magic" as Mr. Adams calls it, ends. The first effect of "economic competition is to dissipate the energy that has been amassed by war." But as a wealthy class develops, diffusion is followed by concentration. The wealthy control legislation and exploit the energy of the productive classes. Economic society is crippled, and gradually ceases to produce wealth. The hoarded wealth of the few no longer seeks productive forms of activity, but is squandered upon luxuries and vices. A period of decline and decay sets in. The many are helpless because the few make the laws and control the police power. But at last the time comes again when hoarded wealth can no longer protect its own. Then the cycle is repeated. Thus there is no hope for society save in this endless labor of Sisyphus. The nations are doomed to go on toiling up the slope, only to find in their very prosperity the seeds of decay and ruin, which develop in obedience to laws irrevocable and irremediable.

Mr. Adams' metaphysical vagaries would be harmless enough did they not have a direct application to present issues. Some passages, in fact, sound very much like campaign literature.

"As the twentieth century approaches, the salient characteristic of the age is the ascendancy of the economic type of man. . . . Although the conventions of popular government are preserved, capital is at least as absolute as under the Cæsars, and, among capitalists, the money lenders form an aristocracy. Debtors are in reality powerless because

of the extension of that very system of credit which they invented to satisfy their needs. Although the volume of credit is gigantic, the basis upon which it rests is so narrow that it may be manipulated by a handful of men. That basis is gold. In gold debts must be paid; therefore when gold is withdrawn the debtor is helpless, and becomes the servant of his master" (p. 292).

On page 289 the "crime of '73" appears in a somewhat new light:

"These bankers conceived a policy unrivaled in brilliancy which made them masters of all commerce, industry, and trade. They engrossed the gold of the world, and then, by legislation, made it the sole measure of values. What Samuel Lloyd and his followers did to England in 1847 became possible for his successors to do to all the gold-standard nations in 1873. When the mints had been closed to silver, the currency being inelastic, the value of money could be manipulated like that of any article limited in quantity, and thus the human race became the subjects of the new aristocracy which represented the stored energy of mankind."

Mr. Adams does not follow his doctrine through to its application. He need not. The application lies on the surface. If we are at the culmination of an epoch of hoarding, and to the stringencies and distresses of the period there is to be no relief, save as we enter the period when those who have not take by violence from those who have the results of their spoliation, then it follows as a matter of duty, if the word might be allowed in Mr. Adams' system, we must hasten the era of redistribution, or, in other words, the new era of plunder. We must preach the Gospel of Plunder as the application of what Mr. Carlyle would call the "Gospel of Dirt."

These gloomy doctrines the author professes to draw from history, and if we once admit his method we may admit his results. He treats history as a sort of conjurer's hat, the capacity of which in producing startling effects is limited only by the fancy of the prestidigitator. There is, however, this interesting difference between the ordinary conjurer and Mr. Adams. The conjurer knows his hat. Mr. Adams does not. In the chapter on "Modern Centralization," in which the author recounts the succession of recent economic movements, however we may take issue with his deductions, in the statement of fact he is generally accurate. But in treating the Middle Ages the author's knowledge of facts appears not only superficial but limited. So long as he adheres to Mommsen, Fustel de Coulanges, or Luchaire he is safe

from the critic, but whenever he has the hardihood to leave these guides and speak from his own general knowledge of the subject in hand he is beyond his depth at once. The following sentence, selected at random, is a fair sample of the kind of history Mr. Adams writes when left to his own resources: "Probably the Greek Empire had culminated under Justinian, who was crowned in 527, about fifty years after Odoacer assumed the title of King of Italy." Of the same order is the remarkable characterization of the Vandal migration given on page 25. It is a pity that Mr. Adams did not consult at least the *Britannica* before writing up the Vandals. In the present progress of historic science it is safer than Gibbon. In general the range of authorities from whom the author has drawn his facts is exceedingly meager for a subject covering so vast a range as the *Law of Civilization and Decay*. The absolute dearth of untranslated German authorities, save one reference to an obscure sermon of Zwingli, leads to the conviction that the author has hobbled through his subject upon one crutch. In English history, besides the standard French and English economic works upon prices and corresponding subjects he cites largely from Froude and Macaulay. One misses Hume and Agnes Strickland. Of German history, either in German or any other language, the author is profoundly ignorant. His account of the "Canossa affair" (pp. 52-54) is simply delicious. One seldom meets outside of the old monastic biographers a finer piece of imaginary history.

The above sufficiently prepares the reader for the complete failure of the author to comprehend the great movements of the middle period out of which has arisen our modern civilization. The fact is the author sees with only one eye. He has lost the power of perspective. He sees everything flat. All human progress is to him the outworking of greed. The history of civilization is the record of a series of pirate raids. He fails to see the operation of any motives more noble than those which control the bloody wrangle of a bandit's camp over the division of spoil. Hence there is scarcely a movement in the past which he understands or presents fairly. The economic causes of the decline of the ancient classical civilization he has grasped correctly, but in endeavoring to make the most of his argument he has sadly distorted the proportions in ignoring other causes. Of the economic origin of feudalism he might have made more, greatly to the strengthening of his general argument, if he had known more about feudalism. When he comes to treat of the extension of Christianity,

the development of the ecclesiastical system, the Holy Roman Empire, the rise of monasticism, the Crusades, the Communes, the national monarchy, the Reformation, the author fails either to convince or to satisfy. No one of these movements was without wide-reaching and important economic results. But in his effort to prove his law the author has strangely misplaced cause and effect. The Reformation particularly is beyond him. He mistakes the slime and silt and froth and filth, the accompaniments of the flood, for the rising tide itself.

The book can do harm only in inexperienced hands. But unfortunately just at this time inexperienced hands are reaching out for such books, and witless heads are only too ready to accept anything that fans the prevailing discontent, or seems to justify the proscription of those who by their skill and energy and industry have enriched society.

BENJAMIN S. TERRY.

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*Classes and Masses.* By W. H. MALLOCK. Imported by Macmillan & Co. Pp. 139.

A CLEVER writer is Mr. Mallock, and his sentences are transparent as crystal. He knows how to present the optimistic view of our industrial order to people who have never been hungry in a most satisfactory style. He knows how to sum up the results of a century of class struggle, of heroic sacrifice, of earnest philanthropy, of patriotic legislation, so as to make it all appear the "natural product" of forces outside human choice and effort. Wealth "distributes itself." The minimum of humane living is determined by the amount which can be produced on the poorest acres of cultivable land. The actual rate of wages depends on what consumers are willing to pay for goods, not on what the workmen demand. The census shows that the condition of the great majority of the people is comfortable and is improving. The discussion aims to break the force of the socialistic demand for governmental help by showing that great and rapid advance is made without the interference of the slow and clumsy agency of the state with the delicate machinery of private enterprise.

The triumph of the book is too easy. Its success depends in part upon suppressing many notorious facts. One may be quite in sympathy with the purpose of the author, and believe that his statements are reliable as far as they go, and yet conclude that a deeper appreciation of the defects of our civilization would give the argument a more